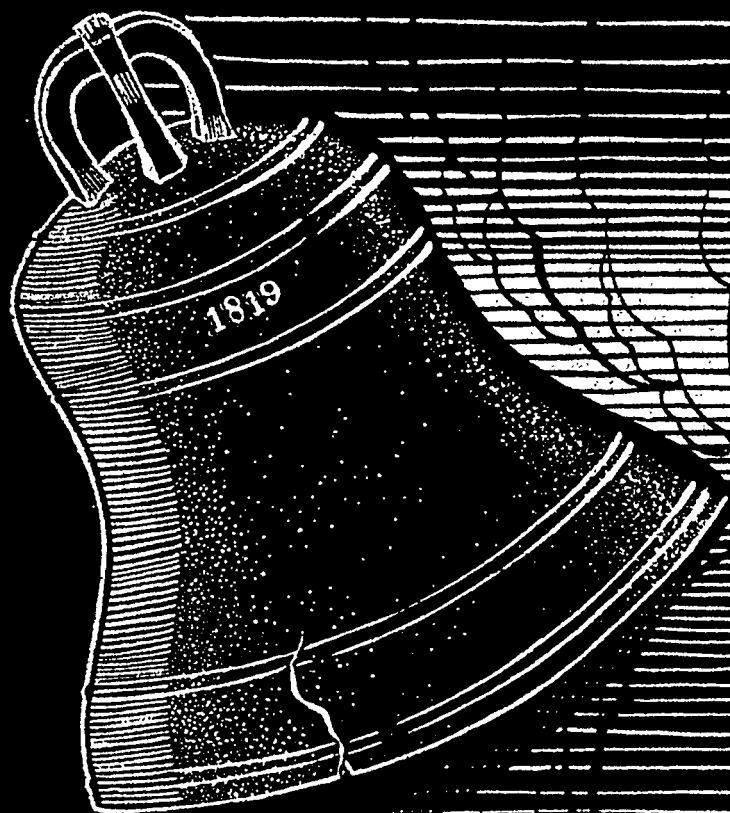


BELLS OF RED RIVER



by
**MARGARET
ARNETT
M^{MC}LEOD**

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1910

BELLS OF RED RIVER



By
Margaret Arnett MacLeod

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FOREWORD

HISTORY cannot be divided into definitely edged eras, each ending as an act of a play ends with the dropping of the curtain, which goes up again to show a new stage setting for the next act. But the Red River era ended almost as abruptly as that, on Tuesday, August 24th, 1870, when the Wolseley expedition marched along the river trail which is now Main Street, to Fort Garry. Red River was unique, and its history claims interest and deserves study. No other Western city on this continent began, as Winnipeg began, in a community whose peaceful, pastoral life had been going on for half a century, as remotely isolated as an island in mid-ocean.

Red River history has had no more devoted and persevering student and research worker than Margaret Arnett MacLeod whose article, "Lord Selkirk's Bell," is the first of a series of eight, "Bells That Rang in Red River." In this article Mrs. MacLeod tells, all too modestly, how with a persistence worthy of Sherlock Holmes himself, she searched for that first of the bells of Red River and, after many disappointments from false clues, found it at long last lying forgotten in the cellar of the old church at St. Francois Xavier. For ninety-seven years its identity as the gift of Lord Selkirk to the mission at St. Boniface has been lost. In 1840 it was taken from among the bells of St. Boniface Cathedral and hung in the steeple of the church at St. Francois Xavier.

Since 1868, when it was blown down in a great storm which visited Red River in that year and left cracked and "jangled out of tune" on a tombstone in the churchyard, it has lain silent and sunk from knowledge in a corner of the church cellar. That ancient bell, with the birthmark "1819" cast on its side in its founding, the first church bell whose voice was heard in the West, should be treasured as a relic of Manitoba's past, with the other early Red River bells which Mrs. MacLeod writes about in this booklet.

W. J. HEALY, Provincial Librarian.

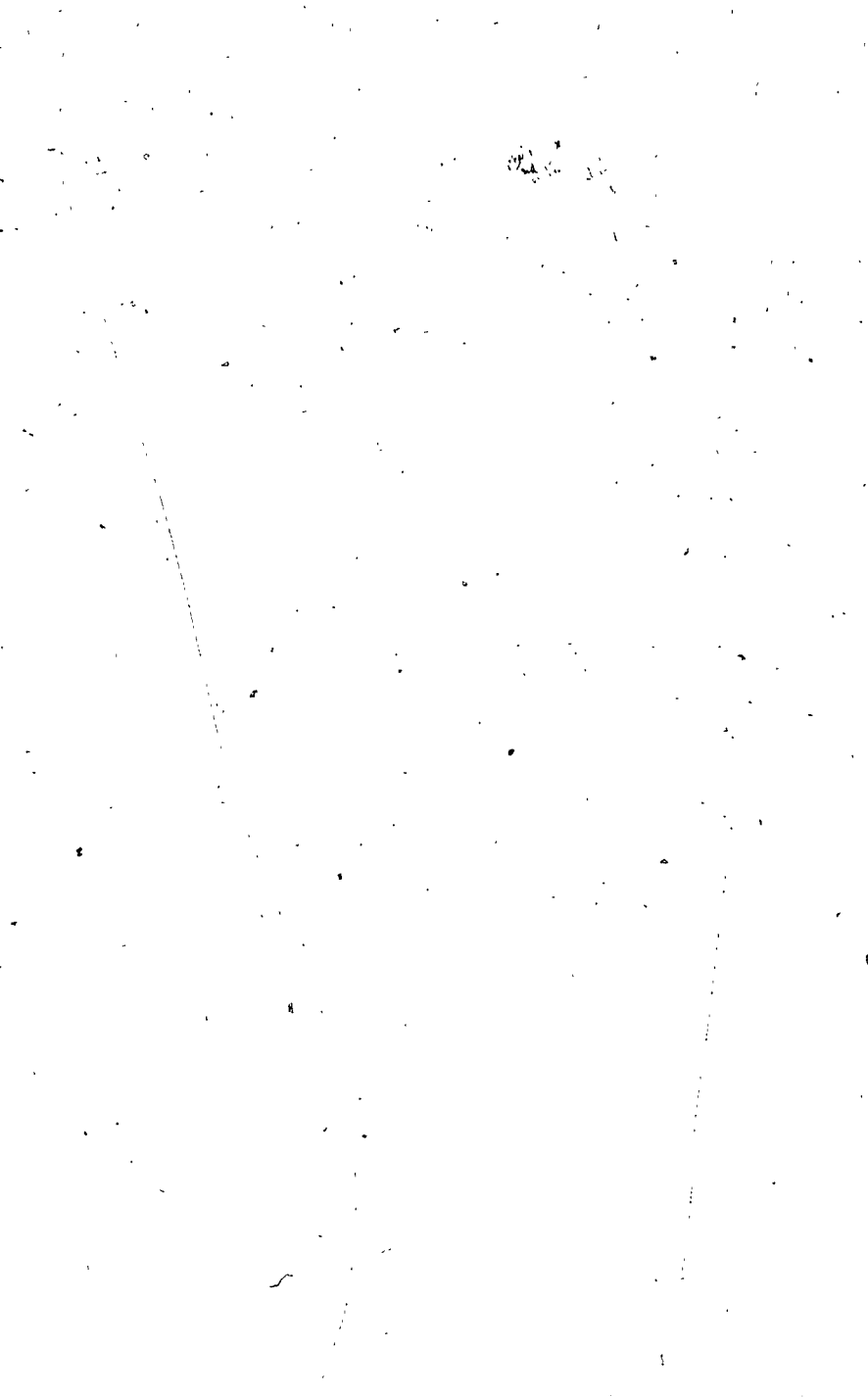
Winnipeg, June 1st, 1937



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Bells of Red River

By MARGARET ARNETT MACLEOD



I. Lord Selkirk's Bell

THROUGH long years a Hudson's Bay Company official who lived and died in the Red River Settlement before 1819, cherished a dream. Nothing is known of him, not even his name.

He visioned his little world around the remote fur trade post transformed, and the dream fraught no doubt with poignant memories of ordered life in some quiet English country-side, had come down to us.

He said: "I long to see the first little Christian church and steeple of wood slowly rising among the wilds, to hear the sound of the first Sabbath bell that has tolled here since creation."

He never heard that first bell toll. From his position of authority he probably had his part in bringing about the new day, but he met the too frequent fate of those who dream of better things, he died before they came to birth.

But his dream came true. The sound of the first bell that tolled in Red River since creation was heard at last when, in 1819 Lord Selkirk sent one from London to the colony he had founded at Fort Douglas.

There were others who longed for the sound of the first bell, others who knew the joy of realization. For seven years the Catholic settlers sent out by Lord Selkirk in 1811 had been without a priest, and when, in 1818, Fathers Provencher and Dumoulin were finally sent from Quebec they came with a promise from his lordship of what must have been to them the culmination of all his benefactions; he promised a bell for their Mission.

It is interesting to note that it was throughout the devastating litigations in which Lord Selkirk was involved in Montreal in 1818 and when his health finally gave way; that he and Lady Selkirk, with the greatest of kindness, outfitted the Red River missionaries, ending with the promise of the bell.

November of that year found his lordship in London a broken man, broken in health, in fortune, and in his life's ambitions. But even amid such a collapse his promise was not forgotten.

It was probably before leaving for France to spend the winter, but from whence he never returned, that he gave the order for the bell and made arrangements for its blessing, since it was shipped from London to Red River in the spring of 1819.

In October, 1819, Father Provencher, who had arrived at Red River the previous year, received a letter from Lord Selkirk via Hudson Bay, advising him that he had sent for the mission "a few articles . . . especially a 100-pound bell which had been blessed in London."

Only part of the consignment arrived at St. Boniface with the letter, the rest, including the bell, being detained at York Factory owing to a scarcity of barges to transport it inland. So the exact date of the arrival of Lord Selkirk's bell at Red River is not known.

In Father Morice's "History of the Catholic Church in Western Canada," he relates that in the autumn of 1819 Father Provencher's "heart was gladdened by the arrival of a 100-pound bell from Mylord Selkirk."

One can imagine the excitement and the encouragement both to the priests and to those who had so long waited that day.



PRICELESS BELL FOUND—The 100-pound bell, which Lord Selkirk presented to the Catholic Mission at St. Boniface 118 years ago was found recently by the author. The bell (left) was found in the basement of the Roman Catholic church of St. Francois Xavier (right). Father Fyfe, parish priest (top left), is shown pointing to the bell in the basement of the church.

Father Provencher wrote that "on a splendid situation . . . at St. Boniface . . . opposite the Northwest's and Hudson's Bay forts and . . . farther up the river from Fort Douglas," he and his unskilled workmen, with few and crude tools were completing the chapel part of a poplar log house and chapel combined, and beginning a more substantial oak log church a little distance away.

They needed encouragement. It was another famine year due to grasshoppers and they faced the necessity of again going to Pembina for the winter in order to exist.

"We have only a few pounds of flour . . . charitably from some settlers," Father Provencher related, "so we are far from eating bread and being comfortable. . . . We will have to keep Lent on buffalo meat."

However the Settlement was happy in the bell's arrival and its peals ringing in the new day for Red River no doubt brought fresh courage to the hearts of the brave missionaries as they listened. One can imagine how all within hearing, both at the forts across the river and throughout the colony must have thrilled to the sound of the first bell tolling here since creation!

In 1822 the still unfinished oak log chapel became a cathedral when Father Provencher was made a bishop. It was built with a tower, so on its completion it is probable that the waiting bell was hung there. But there is no record of any such event.

In fact, as far as can be learned through much searching of original sources no mention was ever again made of the bell.

Today, over a hundred years later, that bell takes on a new significance. In the comfort and security of settled life in this place, we realize what we owe to those who, through flood, fire, famine and fur trade wars colonized the country; and we recognize a special debt to Lord Selkirk, whose vision of this as a land of safe and happy homes came true through sacrifice on his part eventually, of all that he had, even to his life.

He died a young man in April, 1820, so that the bell remained the only public gift he made to the colony he founded. As such, it is of keen interest to all in this western land who share in its heritage.

In searching for the history of bells in Red River that "first bell that tolled here since creation," and which was the only gift of a founder to his colony, seemed of especial interest. But it was lost. It had been lost for nearly a hundred years. The last word about it was written in 1819.

It was the only bell of the Catholic church until 1840, when it was succeeded by a chime of three bells, a gift from Quebec friends to Bishop Provencher for his new cathedral of the famous "turrets twain," which bells still hang in the present cathedral.

What, then, became of Lord Selkirk's bell? No one knew. Not even a surmise or legend existed. It went into complete oblivion after 1840.

So I began a search covering some years. I tracked down bells far and near; I squeezed through trap doors and climbed into church towers, but with no success.

I traced bells that had gone to Quebec. I was on the verge of finding it. I was assured several times that I had found it, only to be disappointed. I searched in archives. I corresponded with people whom I was told would surely know. I even questioned a historian in a mental institution whose memory was said to still hold; all with no trace of the missing bell.

It might have been given to the only church outside St. Boniface, in 1840, that of St. Francois Xavier, but I was informed that their bell was fairly recent and they knew nothing of the lost bell.

Perhaps in 1840 it had been given to some mission which later went out of existence or burned down and the bell had been destroyed. Or it might have gone down in a fire in 1839 when a school next the oak cathedral was burned, involving the latter to some extent.

So I tried to resign myself to the loss. However hope would not be quenched, it always sprang anew. Sometime that bell just might turn up!

Bells were not lost in any mere hundred years! St. Patrick's bell at Belfast was over 800 years old. Bells rang for centuries. Great Tom of Oxford, and the bell of Notre Dame had been ringing for over 250 years. Bells outlasted dynasties, peoples and kings; they summoned soldiers to arms and Christians to church; they ushered in massacres; they rang over slaughtered or ransomed cities, in the hour of victory or loss. Bells made history.

Montreal has preserved one of the Louisburg bells, the chapel bell of Tadousac has been ringing for over two hundred years in Quebec. I just could not give up. Manitoba must have its ancient bell!

The same question always came back. If it had not been melted beyond recognition by fire, it still existed, but where?

Time went on and nothing came of any new line of search so I went for a rest to a quiet farm across the river from the church at St. Francois Xavier, a home that had struck down its roots there before Manitoba had been thought of.

I would forget about bells. They gave lots of trouble and one never got anywhere. I would write about Eastern Canada, its history was all down in black and white and neatly pigeon-holed. So I did, and once more forgot about the bell that would not stay forgotten.

At dinner one day, talk turn on the church across the river which treasures one of the oldest written parish histories in the country, and I voiced my disappointment that the books carried nothing about Lord Selkirk's bell.

The quiet lady behind the teapot looked up. "I remember as a small child," she said, "seeing an old cracked bell lying on the ground near the church. We used to go along a little path from the convent to the church for catechism and the bell was a familiar sight lying among the long grass a little distance away." That was all. She knew nothing more, but it was enough to investigate.

A visit to the house of the parish priest, the presbytery, which has since burned down, took one back a hundred years to the time it was built. It stood that autumn day in snow, close by the busy highway, the oldest house in the country, with still its small paned windows, its hanging chimney and hand-made doors.

Father Fyfe, grey haired and courtly, with a suggestion of Sir Wilfred Laurier, is not of the West. He has been only twenty years at St. Francois Xavier, so when asked about the parish history he reached to a nearby cupboard for the precious record dating from 1824. But again I was told it contained nothing about an early bell. Father Fyfe recalled none but the one in use, nor any mention of one.

I related his parishioner's memory of the cracked bell on the ground; at first with no reaction. Then, sitting in his arm chair in the sunlight, and matching the finger-tips of his hands together in thought, he said slowly, as if trying to recall something. "I think, madam, that there *is* an old bell in the basement of the church. It was there when I came here."

"There is a bell!" and I leaned eagerly forward. "Could I see it?"

"Ah, no, madam; it is too cold. The church is not heated."

So the neighbor who had driven me to the presbytery, who was also a member of the parish Syndic and familiar with the basement, again volunteered for service.

While he put on his coat the priest gave him instructions and a flashlight. And I, controlling my excitement, gave him paper and pencil and asked him to write down markings of any kind which he might find upon the bell, and he departed.

We talked a little absently. The minutes were hours. Would he find anything? High hopes so often, and so often bells that told no tale!

Five minutes passed, then ten; and our messenger returned. He came in and put his hat and the flashlight on the table and unbuttoned his coat. Turning, it seemed with studied deliberation, he leaned calmly against a nearby doorway. The man's composure was maddening!

"Did you find the bell?" asked Father Fyfe. I held my breath, and he nodded affirmatively. The paper was dangling in his hand and there was nothing on it! Again I drew in my breath sharply.

A moment of tense silence, only the distant clatter of a pan on the kitchen stove. The priest in the sunlight changed the position of his hands on the chair arms.

The man at the doorway shifted a little. Crumpling the paper slowly in his hand he asked, "What date would you expect to find on the bell if there was one?"

If there was one! "Eighteen nineteen," I answered eagerly.

"That is the date on the bell," he said.

Father Fyfe jumped up, reaching for his biretta and put it on his head. I got into my outdoor things. The priest meanwhile was so excited that he had put his cap on crooked and had to put it on again.

BELLS OF RED RIVER

We hurried off to see for ourselves. Across the crunchy snow, into the cold church, and down into the basement, stumbling in our eagerness on the dark stairs as we followed our guide with the flashlight.

There, among barrels and boxes and sacks and the usual things stored in such places, we found Lord Selkirk's bell; long forgotten so that the date of casting was not discernible until the accumulations of the years had been brushed away. Now in the bright circle of the flashlight, the figures stood out clear, "1819."

I was later able to clear up the mystery of the crack in the bell and learn its simple history during the ninety-seven years in which it had been lost. For, as far as can be learned, even though it was given to the St. Francois Xavier church in 1840 and rang there until 1868, no one ever knew that it was Lord Selkirk's bell.

In July, 1868, the bell with the small steeple in which it hung, crashed down in the hurricane which devastated Red River, and thereafter it lay in the churchyard, only an old cracked bell, of interest to no one.

An early settler recalls that when he came to the parish in 1877 the bell was lying on a fallen and crumbling tombstone, but its clapper was gone.

In 1872 a new bell was hung in the old church, which church was replaced by the present one in 1900. And it was then that someone, no doubt with an eye to tidiness, put the bell which had lain outside for thirty-two years, in the basement of the new church.

The missing clapper too, has come to light. It was picked up by a parishioner many years ago, across the road from the church, and has now been restored to the bell.

II. Rev. John West's Bell

IT WAS a summer Sunday when I heard the bell of a country church calling to worship. I had left the main highway going north from Winnipeg a mile or more south of Selkirk. Following a short road cutting east through the bush I found myself on a grassy space beside St. Clement's churchyard, at the top of a long wooded incline to the river.

I was in search of the second bell that rang in the new day for Red River; John West's bell of 1820.

Inside the gates stood a simple stone church among its gravestones and lovely uncrowded old trees, a church described as "the smallest and yet the most serenely beautiful of all the Red River churches."

Birds sang in the still air among quiet leaves their accompaniment to the ringing of the bell, while through the trees below, the river shone a silver band at the end of the spacious slope.

Quiet folk in Sabbath garb whose forefathers under the headstones had known the sound of the same bell, came along the path to the church. Bright young things home from the nearby city for Sunday, subdued in the hallowed spot, came in groups. Humble men of courtly bearing, a striking inheritance of the old Hudson's Bay Company tradition, followed with a kindly greeting for the stranger as they passed. The place was steeped in all the peace the world has lost.

While the bell was still ringing I went through the flagstoned entry past the iron-bound doors and found a back seat. It was a simple interior; early memorials on the walls, the old holy table hand-made seventy-five years ago, two altar chairs carved before Manitoba was born and electric bulbs replacing the flame in hanging oil lamps without disturbing the past.

Over seventy-five years ago John West's bell disappeared from church history. I was told it was still in use in one of the smaller churches along the river, but no one was sure which. Then someone said it had been given to St. Clement's and I had come to see for myself. I would know by the date on it—1820.

As I sat waiting for the service my mind wandered to the bell. Could it be possible that the bell above was the first bell that had ever rung out its resonant call west of the Red River? If so this spot had heard the songs of the very boatmen who had brought the bell and John West, the first missionary of the Church of England, to Western Canada.

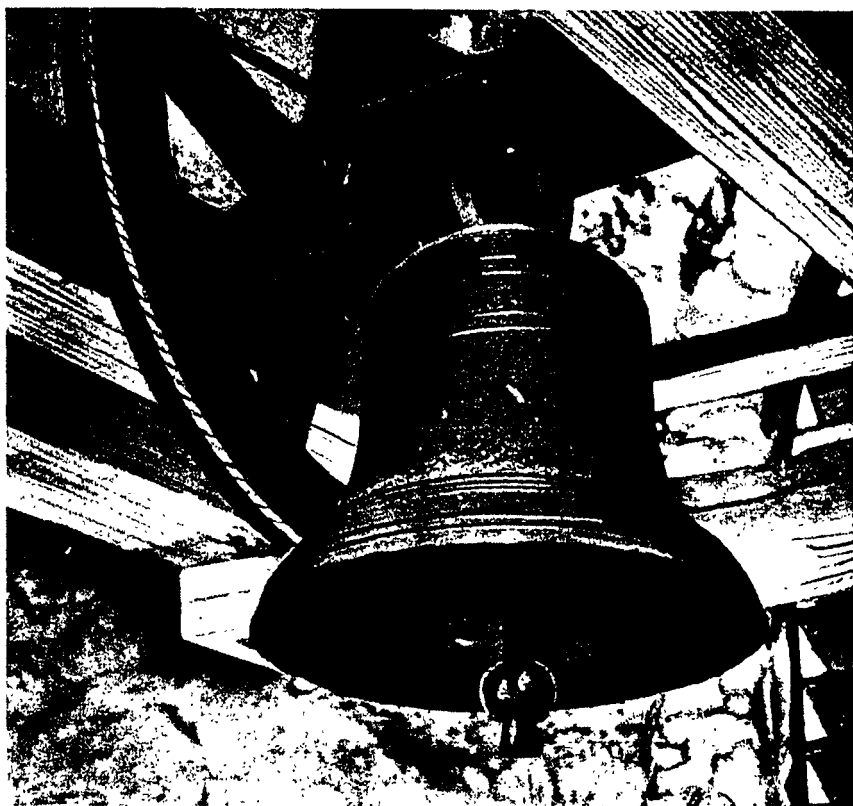
My imagination was stirred. I could almost hear the splash of the oars and see the young Oxford graduate, after his four months' trip from England, looking out on the untamed field of his future labors.

I recalled his words: "On the 14th of October, 1820," he said, "we reached the Settlement (where modern Winnipeg now stands) consisting of a number of huts widely scattered along the margin of the river. In vain did I look for a cluster of cottages where the hum of a small population at least, might be heard as in a village. . . .

"There was an unfinished building as a Catholic church with a small house adjoining, the residence of the priest . . . but few marks (anywhere) of human industry. . . . Almost every inhabitant we passed bore a gun upon his shoulder and all appeared in a wild hunter-like state."

Perhaps the bell ringing above me had seen this. Perhaps it had been part of those voyageurs' heavy loads over the long portages from Hudson Bay when West said he heard them "execrate the man who had first found out such a way into the interior."

Arrived at Fort Douglas (near the C.P.R. depot of today), West like Father Provencher, two years before, held his first service in the Colony House of the Fort, and though he began immediately to build, he continued preaching there for a year; the first regular church services ever held west of the Red River.



JOHN WEST'S BELL—Another historic bell of the early Red River settlement hangs in the belfry of the little church at St. Clement's. It was brought here in 1820.

Three years previously Lord Selkirk had summoned his Protestant colonists and stood near a spot where he directed them to build their church. So on the place he chose, on the banks of a little stream called Parsonage Creek, which ran into the Red River just north of the present St. John's Park, John West's building operations began.

He told of many difficulties: near starvation in the colony for a year, "little willing assistance in the project; the people not liking to exert themselves," and no co-operation from the Scotch in any of his work.

However, in 1822, his first building, 60 by 20, ~~ended~~ ^{served} as a school and temporary place of worship, "was opened for use by divine service."

In the public archives at Ottawa there is a water color of this long log shack inscribed, "Done from nature in 1822," and in the picture is the bell in a rough log frame against a background of young trees.

By 1823 West felt he was making some progress. On March 10th, he wrote: "The ringing of the Sabbath bell now collects an encouraging congregation and some of us, I trust, could experimentally adopt the language of the psalmist in saying, 'I was glad when they said unto us, let us go into the house of the Lord.'"

Some greater building enthusiasm must have been kindled, with more settlers brought to vision the new day for Red River, for by June, the same year, the church was finished, even to the erection of the spire and bell.

On June 2nd, West wrote: "130 at church. . . It is a most gratifying sight to see the colonists in groups, direct their steps on the Sabbath morning towards the Mission House at the ringing of the bell, which is now elevated in a spire attached to the building."

From an original drawing of the church which illustrated West's diary, published in 1827, it must have been no inconsiderable task for unskilled workmen to erect such a spire and house the bell there. They could so easily have been content to worship in the schoolhouse and let the bell stay in a belfry on the ground.

Perhaps John West had a vision of how far his bell was to ring the gospel. So in primitive fashion, with primitive windlass, block and tackle, the workmen must have toiled until the spire and bell were up.

It takes little imagination to realize with what joy they listened when the feat was accomplished, to the first bell ringing out from a church tower in Red River. A church bell ringing in St. Boniface, a church bell ringing at St. John's! The people in that isolated spot must have felt their meagre hamlet a metropolis!

West was overjoyed with the achievement, as well he might be. Later in the month he wrote: "A few evenings ago as I returned from calling upon some of the settlers, the lengthened shadows of the setting sun upon the buildings raised in my mind a pleasing train of thought. I considered it a point gained to have a public building dedicated to religious purposes, whose spire should catch the eyes of wandering natives or settled colonists, and looked for some moral effect on the population at large."

Again he said, "I never see the establishment but with peculiar feelings of delight, and contemplate it as the dawn of a brighter day in the dark interior of a moral wilderness."

For some unknown reason instead of John West's family coming out to him as he had expected, he returned to them that year. At the morning service on his last Sunday in Red River his church was consecrated. In the evening, before he preached his last sermon, he listened for the last time to the sound that had been so sweet to his ears, his bell calling the people to worship, and he recorded leaving Red River in tears.

But still the bell went on ringing in the new day, as West knew it would. More workers came from England (his successor arriving on the ship that carried West back) and some of these have recorded their joy at the sound of the bell. They started new churches down the river and farther afield until the ends of half a continent had been reached, but the Upper Church (St. John's) remained always the centre.

"The tones of the far-off bell" in Whittier's song of the Bells of St. Boniface could never have been more welcome to the weary voyageurs, than was the greeting sound of John West's one lone bell to the brave self-sacrificing missionaries gathering in by dog train or canoe to St. John's.

The bell rang in the first stone church in Red River in 1834, the church that became a cathedral on the arrival of Bishop Anderson from England in 1849, and it is recorded how the bell pealed on that great day.

That was the last mention of the bell I found in church history, but I knew that when a new cathedral was built in 1862, a chime of three bells came from England for it.

Thus far I followed John West's bell. What disposal was made of it when the three bells came? Where was it now?

I had heard a romantic story of a bell having been put up at night at St. Clement's, down the river. Samuel Taylor, one of the builders of the church, kept a diary which is now in the public archives of Canada. His son once wrote to St. John's College magazine: "One word about St. Clement's bell. The account of the hanging of the bell reminds one of the burial of Sir John Moore, at Corunna, 'at dead of night.' The recorder (his father, Samuel Taylor) has the following entry regarding it.

"Nov. 15, 1862: There was a fine bell put up at St. Clement's Church after dark at night, by fire and lantern light."

That was all, "a fine bell," but the year was right, St. John's chimes had come that summer.

As I sat in St. Clement's Church, the bell stopped tolling above me, and I saw its scenes of long ago. The putting up at night—why was it put up at night?—and the gay life about the Lower Fort in which it had its part.

At St. Clement's it was the bell of the official chapel of the fort. It summoned to worship on the first day of the week "gallant Gentlemen Adventurers of the Honorable Company clad in broadcloth with their ladies in silks and satins" who came with dignity to occupy special seats reserved for them.

When soldiers were stationed at the Fort there were "scenes of Sabbath splendor." The bell was that of the garrison church, and its peals brought scarlet tunics to add their gay color and attract many a veiled admiring glance from the young ladies of fashion in the Company pews.

Mingled with the sound of the bell that had been ringing above, one heard the clank of sword, "the silken swish of skirts in the nave," the spring of moccasined feet.

And now our service began. Those same lofty words of worship and songs of praise had sounded within those walls for seventy-five years; the bell had summoned people there for seventy-four years. Could it be John West's bell?

I listened to a simple message of strong appeal from the pulpit, calling on the people in the pews for the same devotion to their church that was shown by the founders of the little chapel, men and women who would walk many miles if necessary rather than absent themselves from the worship of God.

Then the service was over and people gradually moved out of the church, chatting under the trees by the gate. I gathered courage to ask a man who looked like an old-timer, about the bell.

No, he had never heard anything about it. It had been there as long as he could remember.

So he asked the next person who came along, with the same result. "The bell had always been there," that was all they knew. It was evidently just a bell.

Then I spied a framed history of the church's events hanging on the wall. Ah, here I would find it! Incidents of 1859, of '61, of '64. Nothing about a bell!

I tried again. "Had anyone heard of the hanging of their bell at night?" No, no one had heard that romantic story.

The sexton was coming down the aisle intent on his duties now the service was over. He rang that bell every Sunday; it was part of his life; he would know.

He paused wonderingly at my question, and scratched his head in a puzzled fashion, as if to stimulate his memory. No, he had never heard anything about the bell, nothing at all. "But it has a fine ring," he volunteered finally, as he went on.

Then I did find someone who knew St. Clement's had a historic bell, a fine old gentleman from an early Hudson's Bay Company family. He had grown up to the tones of the bell and loved it. As a lad he had heard of it having been hung at night by bonfire and lantern light and often wondered why, but no one knew.

He could not say whether the bell that rang each Sunday was John West's bell or not, but would I like to go up in the tower and see?

Later I learned that Bishop Thomas, who built the tower, and some others, knew that it was West's bell. Rev. Mr. Swallow recalls hearing, that enthusiasm over the first mounting of the bell at St. Clement's ran so high that the men worked late into a Saturday night so the bell might ring next day. But I found no one that summer Sunday to tell me.

So we went up into the tower. Strips of afternoon sunshine streamed through the lattices on the big bell we found hanging there. All but the man who knew and loved his bell had gone on to more interesting pursuits. The shining lines of light illumined the figures before us, "1820."

John West's bell!

BELLS OF RED RIVER

It had been ringing in this region for 117 years and, far from being an object of general interest, far from being widely prized for its part in ringing in the new day for Red River, it had sunk into historic oblivion.

Like the Selkirk bell when it was given to the St. Francois Xavier church, it had lost its identity before being passed on. The church recorder wrote at the time, merely that St. Clement's had been given "a fine bell."

I gazed on those figures and on the bell. This bell had rung out its clarion call for God continuously since it came to the savage shores of Red River in 1820. It had rung the gospel to the farthest reaches of a diocese as large as Russia, a diocese spoken of as the most uninviting one in the world. It had sent men off and called men in; 600 miles to Hudson Bay, 800 miles to the Rocky Mountains, 1400 miles to the Arctic Ocean, 2,000 miles to the Yukon; probably making world history, and that within forty-two years!

John West's bell has found an eminently fitting home in the beautiful little old world tower of St. Clement's. Surely there should be a brass plate there, bearing the bell's proud record and its part in the changing days of over a century.

III. Two Early School Bells

THERE were school bells in early Red River, but the few that survive have been washed up by the flood-tide of the years on the shores of today without their history, which it is now almost impossible to obtain.

Trying to trace a certain early bell I found myself one sunny summer day at Hudson's Bay House. When my business was finished the archivist said, "We have had an old bell here for many years, but we haven't its history. Would you care to see it?"

Of course I was immediately interested and the archivist got out the big book in which the bell was listed. "No. 121. First school bell of Lockport. Brass. Received from Miss A. McDougall," I read. That was all, so I went up to inspect it.

In a dusty lumber room at the top of Hudson's Bay House I found a sturdy hand bell that has lain on a shelf for twenty-five years. It has not been discarded, since it was presented to the Hudson's Bay Co. as an interesting and important relic by the late Mr. McDougall, for many years sergeant-at-arms in the legislature of Manitoba. Yet he could not supply its history to qualify for the Company's museum, so it has stayed on the shelf.

What was known was definite enough, "the first school bell of Lockport." If it was an early bell the place was not Lockport then; that name came later with the locks.

I learned from the fly-leaf of a little Bible seventy-five years old, in the Truthwaite family, that Lockport was part of the settlement along the river known as Little Britain. English colonists settled there and farther down in Old England; names we are familiar with today as districts along the electric railway.

Most of the early schools of Red River were held through the generosity of the Church Missionary Society of England. Wherever a man of any schooling could be found in a parish, the Society paid him to gather the neighboring children together, in his own house if no other place was available, and teach them their three Rs, while the clergy were the school inspectors.

Mrs. Ross, who was a Truthwaite, one of the oldest families along the river, told me of one of these schools, the one from which the bell came. Richard Stevens, a retired Hudson's Bay Company "writer," (clerk) a portly, clean-shaven gentleman in black clothes and a white shirt as befitted his position, was the schoolmaster.

He kept school in his own log house and later in a separate little room built beside it for the purpose, just across the road from the Lockport church of today, and the bell called the children to reading, writing and spelling lessons learned from the Bible, their only school book.

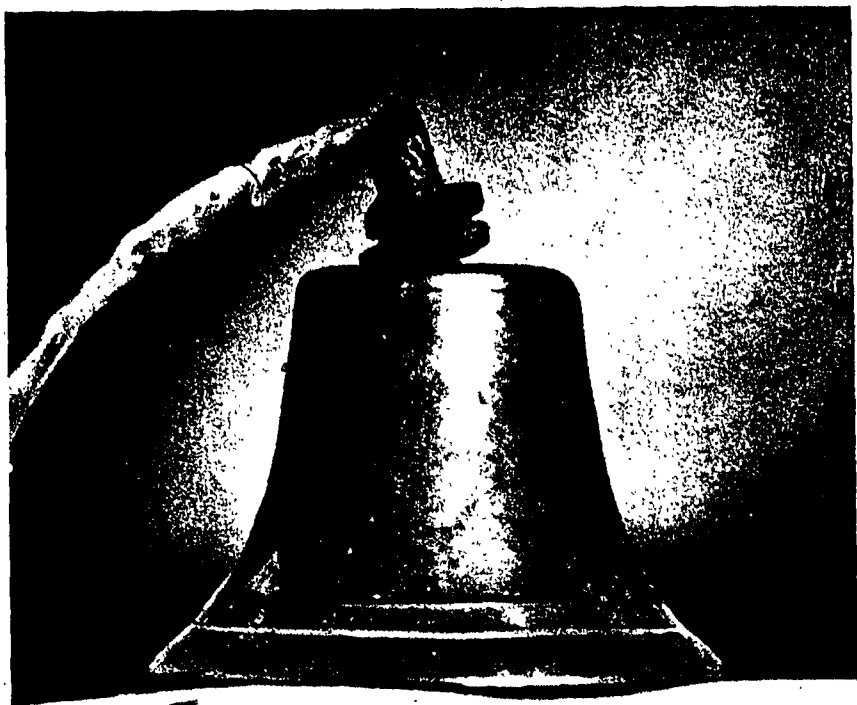
Stevens was first listed in the Red River census as "keeping a school" there, in 1849.

Mrs. Ross lived near the Stevens home, but too young at that time to go to school herself, she used to hear the school bell ring and watch from a window, her four older brothers and sisters answering its call and being engulfed within the school door. That was in the '60s, but she can yet hear that bell and the sound of flying feet to and from school.

Mrs. John Mowat, of Old England, who is eighty-three, and Robert Mowat, of Lockport, who is eighty-six, also attended the school and recall the bell. For Mrs. Mowat it was a sound that brought terror to her childish heart, for she lived a distance away, and in constant fear of being late (which just wasn't done) she usually reached the school panting and breathless at the bell's last "ding-dong." How frightened she used to be for fear it would stop ringing before she got there!

The bell reposed during school hours on a shelf, a piece of board nailed high in a corner of the log room to be out of the children's reach. The scholars recall that not the tallest of them could ever even touch it and no one but the master himself rang that bell.

So from its heights it surveyed the scene; children on benches drawn up to a long board the length of the room nailed to the wall at an angle to serve as desks, with some



FORGOTTEN BELL—This bell, lying on a shelf in the Hudson's Bay House, came to the settlement before 1849, was in constant use until 1867, or thereabouts, when it was discarded and presented to the late John McDougall, who gave it to the Hudson's Bay Company.

boy always in the seat of honor behind the teacher by the window. From this vantage point he was privileged to rush out when necessary—without asking permission!—to drive the neighbors' pigs out of the master's garden.

On an October morning in 1851, Rev. Jas. Hunter heard the bell when he was walking down from St. Andrew's to the Lower Fort. He took the opportunity in passing to perform his official duty of visiting the school, but found that only a few children had answered the bell's call owing to an epidemic in the settlement.

It is an interesting possibility that since the bell on the dusty shelf today was Richard Stevens' own property, it may have been the bell of an even earlier school which he taught at Parkdale. Mrs. Fulcher, who died recently, in her 100th year, told me of her two older sisters attending this school in the middle '40s, with Stevens as their teacher, but we have no conclusive proof of the bell's connection there.

Stevens continued to teach in his Little Britain school until about 1867, some time before his death. Then the bell rang no more, its day was done. It was never used again for any other purpose. Richard Stevens himself rang it for the last time in his log school by the river.

The place became the home of Robert Stevens, his son, and with the tide of time, and new generations growing up about it, the bell was just put out of the way and forgotten.

Finally, when the log house was torn down, the old bell was of no interest to the family, and Robert Stevens, recalling its part in early times—he went to that school



HISTORIC BELL—The large hand bell on the desk is just another bell to the children in Middlechurch, but it was one of the first bells to come to the Red River settlement. It dates back to 1812-16 and was first used by Lord Selkirk Settlers as a warning to other boats during fogs on their way to Red River.

himself—gave it to Mr. McDougall with the bare statement that it was the bell of the first school ever held at Lockport.

Then, without a single bit of searching, I came on the very oldest bell of any kind in the whole Red River Settlement! In use every day and as much lost as if it did not exist. All I had to do was to drive down to Middlechurch and walk into the school and there it was on the teacher's desk!

The young teacher who had grown up in the district was sure it was an old bell; it had been there ever since she could remember! And she was calling the children in to school every day with a bell that was used by the Lord Selkirk Settlers to warn boats off in the fogs on their way to Red River between 1812-1816!

It was older than John West's bell! It was older than Lord Selkirk's bell! Some hand at Red River was wielding it in that wilderness before ever they came.

The weight of it! The ring of it! I knew it could warn boats off in a fog as soon as I heard it. The teacher said that it was heavy to ring, but it could be heard a mile away, and I believed her.

The story of this bell survived in two families who lived near the "Middle Church" of early days, some of whom are still living there. The bell was a possession handed down, or just left undisturbed, in the Pritchard family. As time went on it was used to call the men in from the fields, and its summons could be heard in the farthest "park"—an old word used to designate a ploughed field.

Before the Middle Church had a bell Archbishop Matheson's aunt, Eliza Pritchard, who reared him, made it a gift to the church.

At that time the church was used on week days as the school. The benches were just pushed back or rearranged, a table brought forward, and it was a school, with the

BELLS OF RED RIVER

Bibles right there ready to use as readers. And the bell that warned people of church time on Sundays called the children to their lessons on school days.

Harry Pritchard recalls the strength with which Archbishop Matheson's uncle, Sam Pritchard, the teacher, used to ring that bell; the swing of his arm and the resulting clamor that was heard all over the neighborhood!

When a new church was built the old church remained the school and since a hand bell was not needed for a church with a real bell in a belfry, it stayed on at its week-day work.

Through the years it has progressed into whatever school buildings succeeded that first school-in-a-church until the present time, when it must be more than 120 years old.

Hugh Pritchard, Eliza's brother, never forgot the bell nor its history. He often spoke of it and after he was gone the story of the bell came down in the homes of two neighbors, one of them that of the late Mrs. Murray, Archbishop Matheson's sister.

The Archbishop was one of the most astonished people to hear of the bell recently. "Is that old bell still in existence?" he exclaimed, and he was overjoyed when I informed him that it was not only in existence, but that it was probably good for a few hundred years more since for all practical purposes it was just as good as new!

IV. The Bells of St. Boniface

THREE bells, weighing more than 1,600 pounds, on their way to Red River caused the first recorded strike in this country. Undeterred, they travelled the Atlantic five times and became the inspiring theme of a world poet before they finally settled down, according to best bell usage, in a tower. They were Red River's first chimes, the famed bells of St. Boniface.

The founders of the bells, the great Mears of Whitechapel, who also cast London's Big Ben, and have been casting bells since 1570, have probably never sent out bells to a more varied career than the bells of St. Boniface.

One day last autumn I counted one hundred and six steps that went up and up until I could view them hanging high in a tower of St. Boniface Cathedral. There they were, three in a row like the Three Bears of storied fame; the Great Big Bell, the Middle-sized Bell, and the Little Bell, with their date of casting "1862" on each one.

The haze of Indian summer mistily clouded the city below, as they swung, open to all the breezes that blow, above the Red River to which they came ninety-seven years ago, but then bearing the date "1840."

Their coming marked a great day for Red River, the first trine of bells. Looking below with the city hidden in haze I tried to reconstruct that other autumn of 1840.

On a site immediately in front of the present cathedral was a partially finished church of stone with a bishop's house attached which had been under construction for seven years. Halted again and again by lack of skilled workmen, or material, or lack of money for both, it was finally rearing toward completion to replace the small one of oak logs. It was to be the cathedral of the "turrets twain."

Across the river was newly reconstructed Fort Garry with a bell of unmusical voice. Log houses straggled along the banks, while on the St. Boniface property, besides the old and new churches, were a few other buildings. One of them, the bishop's stone house, crudely built without proper masonry, was slowly crumbling to ruin. He wrote that it could not house him another winter.

But his heart was cheered after twenty-two years of cruel hardship and unimaginable trials by the sight of a proper church, which he hoped soon to use. And some friends in Canada had joined in this gift of the bells.

He had men ready at York Factory on Hudson Bay to transport them inland. The settlers were eagerly awaiting them; not one bell, but three! And they had cost the magnificent sum of 101 pounds and—15 shillings!

The bells were set down from the ship and the men started with them on 700 miles of difficult and laborious navigation; sometimes harnessed to a line and plodding along high river banks dragging the loaded boats against the current, sometimes lifting them over shallow rapids, or unloading and carrying both boats and cargo over portages that would number thirty-four by the time they reached Norway House.

Small wonder that voyageurs, as John West related, execrated the man who first found out such a way into the interior.

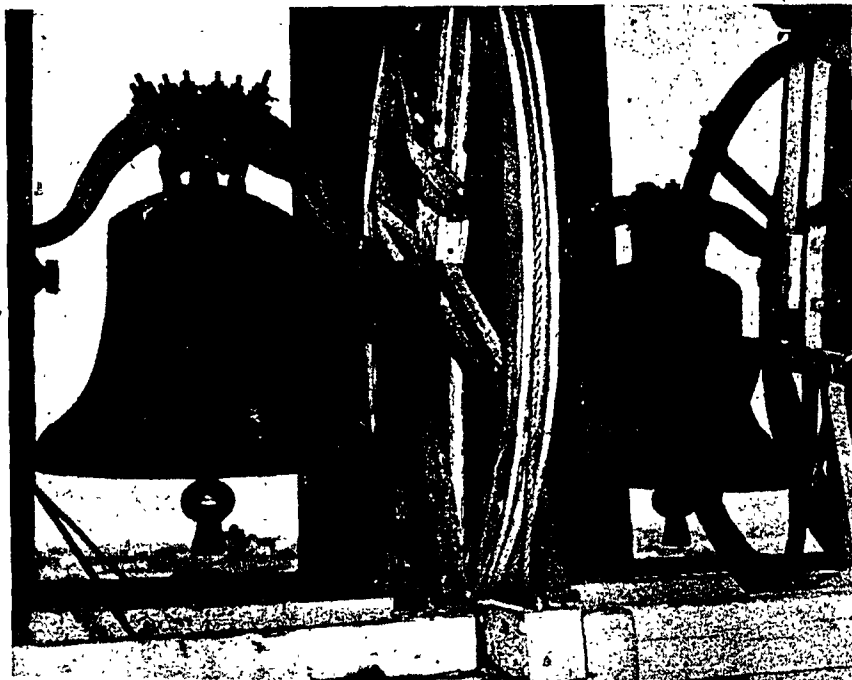
These men did more than that. Before they reached Norway House they went on strike, Red River's first strike. At some point which we do not know, they refused to carry the bells any further.

The task of bringing even ordinary "pieces" of freight in this way can be imagined, burdens that would bend to their shoulders, but 1,600 pounds of hard, unyielding metal on their backs was just too much!

In published reminiscences of the late Mrs. Cowan, she tells of the men's refusal to finish their contract, and how, after much trouble in the matter, Bishop Provencher finally got Andrew McDermot to bring them to their destination.

Those early settlers had only crude color and crude sound to break the bleakness of their endless wilds, and musical sound, even the rhythmic scraping of a home-made fiddle, was dearly prized.

BELLS OF RED RIVER



THE BELLS OF ST. BONIFACE—Probably the most celebrated bells in the northwest, made famous by the poet, John Greenleaf Whittier. They travelled five times across the Atlantic before coming to their final resting place in St. Boniface Cathedral. Cast originally in 1840, they were partly melted in a fire and were sent back to England to be recast in 1862. Only two of the three bells are shown in this picture.

So one can imagine the joy that the musical bells sounding the notes of F, G, and A, brought to beauty-starved Red River.

Bishop Taché in later years spoke of the bells as "possessing melodious beauty and far-reaching tones."

In one of Charles Majr's much resented letters about Red River, published in Toronto, he spoke of reaching Fort Garry one November evening after dark with "the bells of St. Boniface sounding sweetly over the water."

So I leaned from the tower as I stood beside the bells, above the busy city in whose noise their sound is now lost, and thought of that glad All Saints' Day, November 1st, 1840, when they rang out for the first time over empty prairies and uninterrupted space.

I saw the waiting bishop, the humble people gathering. I heard the vespers ringing, of which Whittier speaks, the Angelus calling sweet and clear "to the boatmen on the river, the hunter on the plain."

The exact date when the bells were hung in the church is not known, nor when the turrets themselves were finished.

In 1843 Bishop Provencher wrote of his church still with "no vault, no spire, and the plastering still to be done." In 1844 "a sculptor and carpenter for this work" were secured, and in June, 1846, two years later, he recorded: "Our spire is finished and the other one is being built." So it was probably about this time that the bells were properly housed.

It was in this year when the fierce struggle was going on for free trading, that on Ascension Day the bells rang for mass and saw hundreds of armed Metis gathering

BELLS OF RED RIVER

from along the river, headed by Riel, the "Miller of the Seine," on their way to forcibly take their comrade, Sayer, out of jail. But first, at the bells' summons, they stacked their arms at the church door and came quietly in to mass.

In 1851, J. Wesley Bond, of Philadelphia, visited Red River and wrote: "Opposite (Fort Garry) is the Catholic Cathedral, built of stone in 1832, and still unfinished. The bare, rough, unplastered wall, in front, is cracked and shattered, and is surmounted by two steeples; one finished and containing a chime of bells, the bare timbers of the other tower aloft, dark with age and nakedness.

"I visited the interior this afternoon and found a very spacious nave, which was being remodelled, as also the galleries; and men were at work on scaffolding painting the arched ceiling a deep mazarene blue and ornamenting it with wreaths and festoons of flowers; the work so far as completed, being done in a very artist-like manner."

What stuff these pioneers were made of; eighteen years building a church under circumstances through which only unconquerable courage and sublime faith in God could carry them!

Bond kept a diary on his trip to Red River. As he arrived the bells of St. Boniface were ringing with a beauty of tone that impressed him and he entered all in his diary, which was published in a local paper on his return home. Whittier, visiting Philadelphia at the time, noted the incident and conceived the idea for his poem, which later rang the Bells of St. Boniface over the world.

In 1846 soldiers of the 6th Royal Regiment of Foot came from England and were stationed at Fort Garry, when their surgeon, Dr. Duncan, made a small melodeon for the cathedral which, under Sister Lagrave's hands, brought music to join that of the bells.

By 1853, Bishop Provencher's unceasing and sacrificial labors were finished and his cherished bells rang at his burial.

Bishop Tache, a man of great heart and great ability, one of nature's gentlemen, followed him and took up bravely the responsibilities and tasks fallen on his shoulders.

In 1860, while he was away at the northern missions, a terrific blow fell at St. Boniface. On December 14th, some buffalo grease on the stove in the basement kitchen of the bishop's residence overflowed and set everything aflame. It spread quickly and efforts were made to save the cathedral, to which the residence was attached, by keeping snow piled against the doors leading to it, but in vain.

From the records of the Grey Nuns I learned that the flames spread through the sacristy leading to the church, attacking the large columns of the galleries which fell with a tremendous noise. The church was by then a roaring furnace which soon enveloped the towers.

The three bells crashed down, then one tower after the other until nothing was left standing.

Bishop Tache, on his return, found all in ruins and proceeded to Quebec to ask for help. He then went on to England and while there, made a personal visit to Mears, the founders of his bells, and arranged for their recasting.

They had been broken by their fall and partially melted, but 1,000 pounds of metal had been salvaged and shipped to England—the bells' second trip across the Atlantic.

They were recast early in 1862 and shipped back to Red River. Then all the histories record a strange thing. It is, that one day Bishop Tache, at St. Boniface, was notified that his bells were at St. Paul, and that on making inquiries as to the cost of their transportation from that point by ox-cart he found the project so expensive that it was cheaper to send the bells back to England and have them re-shipped to Red River via Hudson Bay and from thence by York boat.

So in 1862 the bells travelled the ocean a third time only to end at St. Paul. The fourth trip brought them back to England and the fifth, to Red River once more, in 1864.

But the strange incident of the bells coming unexpectedly to St. Paul puzzled me for a long time. I looked everywhere, always hoping to have the mystery explained.

Bishop Tache was a keen man of business. How strange that even though he had been personally at the bell foundry about the bells, that one day he should be surprised by a notification of their presence at St. Paul! Did he not know how they were coming?

He knew the excessive cost of freight from St. Paul in those first years of transportation by ox-cart. Strange that he had not made sure of this not happening. Had he missed making arrangements at the bell foundry as to how they should come?

It was years before I got the answer. Old Mrs. Cowan, who was the wife of the fort surgeon across the river at Fort Garry and at Norway House once said to a friend: "But they were shipped via Hudson Bay! Archbishop Tache had arranged for that when he was in England. No one in their senses would have shipped them then by St. Paul, it was too expensive." I have since seen this confirmed in her memoirs.

The ship the bells were on, bound for Hudson Bay, was almost wrecked in a storm off Newfoundland, and so injured that it had to put in to the harbor of St. John's. From there the bells were sent to Portland, Maine, and from thence to St. Paul.

Bishop Tache had not slipped up, he was too efficient for that.

So at last the bells' travels were over. Thomas Sinclair brought them in his brigade of boats to St. Boniface in 1864. There is an unverified story that they lay a year at York waiting shipment, which may be true since there is a gap of a year in their history while on their travels.

A new cathedral which had been started in 1862 was blessed in '63, but there was no money for a spire. So the bells were mounted in a wooden erection on the south side of the church.

There was still a debt on them and Bishop Tache announced from the pulpit that they would not be rung until paid for. We are told that so anxious were the people of the settlement to hear the sweet voices of the bells again that even the Protestants contributed and Sister Clapin was able to write Bishop Tache's mother (the Bishop being away on a mission tour): "The three bells have arrived. We will hear them for the first time on Christmas Eve."

And so it was; the bells rang for midnight mass, 1864, always a great occasion in the settlement, people of all faiths attending.

How little anyone thought then, that for twenty years the bells were to stay on the ground! Years of famine and destruction from flood, frost, grasshopper and whirlwind came, and it was 1883 before the bells saw a tower again.

However, the settlers always hopeful, kept on at their good work and prayed God for its completion. On March 12th, 1865, there was a most interesting ceremony, the bells were blessed.

What excitement! They were to have god-fathers and god-mothers just like people! Little Mary Louise and Florence McTavish, the Governor's twins across at the Fort were to be god-mothers for two, and their brother James was to be god-father for the third, with Governor McTavish himself, one of the patrons.

The full names of the bells—for they had other godparents—are:

First—Norbert Joseph Florent Henriette Sophie.

Second—Vital Frances Louise Jane Nancy.

Third—James Edward Jeanne.

I was so disappointed when we climbed up to see the bells that their names were not on them.

Early in the spring of 1868 hopes ran high for the completion of the cathedral and the housing of the bells. Beautiful colored glass had been brought at great expense from St. Paul and a very fine rose window was almost completed by July. The spire, too, was well on and an old lady who worked then as a girl in the convent kitchen nearby recalls how people were coming admiringly to view them.

Thursday, July 2nd, had been a hot, sultry day in an unusually torrid summer. In the night sudden violence awakened the people of the settlement to one of the worst storms ever experienced. Morning found the whole country strewn with wreckage, buildings blown down or displaced, even lives had been lost:

The roof of the convent had been blown about and my old lady informant tells of standing at the kitchen door in the early morning and seeing Bishop Tache with bowed shoulders and bent head walking about the scene of devastation. The steeple to carry the bells was scattered to the four winds. The gale in the aperture of the roof had blown down from the choir loft Dr. Duncan's little organ, and the beautiful rose window was completely demolished. Among the wreckage lay trees and bushes that had been twisted out of the ground as if by a giant hand, and not a vestige of any fencing remained. The grounds around the cathedral lay as bare as in their beginnings.

And the years have never dimmed the watcher's memory of the tragic figure and bowed head of the man who walked that morning among the wreck of all their hopes.

It was not until 1883 that the cathedral was finally finished and the bells put in their spire.

Father Rocan recalls them there when Henri Goddard used to be the bell ringer. Henri was especially important at funerals when there was no choir for then he pulled with a will and sang the chants and responses, to his ringing.

He tolled the bells on a sad day in 1885 when the Metis came again from along the river, in their black clothes, for the funeral of their lost leader, Louis Riel, the miller's son who had inherited his father's cause of forty years before.

The bells were in this church when John Greenleaf Whittier had his eighty-fourth birthday, on December 17th, 1891. Governor Schultz and Bishop Tache thought that it would be a suitable honor for the bells that Whittier had made immortal to mark his anniversary with a joy-peal from their tower. His Grace waived the usage that the bells should cease their chimes after the Angelus, and at midnight they pealed forth to usher in the poet's natal day.

Mr. Whittier was informed of the incident by U.S. Consul Taylor and sent the following letter of appreciation to Bishop Tache.

"Newburyport, Mass., 3mo. 5, 1892.

"To Archbishop Tache:

"My dear Friend,—During my illness from the prevailing, epidemic which confined me nearly the whole winter, and from which I am very slowly recovering, a letter from the U.S. Consul at Winnipeg informed me of thy pleasant recognition of my little poem, 'The Red River Voyageur,' (written nearly forty years ago) by the ringing of 'The Bells of St. Boniface' on the eve of my late anniversary.

"I was at the time quite unable to respond, but I feel that I should be wanting in due appreciation of such a marked compliment if I did not even at this late hour, express to thee my heart-felt thanks.

"I have reached an age when literary success and manifestations of popular favor have ceased to satisfy one upon whom the solemnity of life's sunset is resting, but such a delicate and beautiful tribute has deeply moved me.

"I shall never forget it. I shall hear the bells of St. Boniface sounding across the continent and awakening a feeling of gratitude for thy generous act.

"With renewed thanks and the prayer that our Heavenly Father may continue to make thee largely instrumental in His service; I am, gratefully and respectfully thy friend.

"JOHN G. WHITTIER."

In 1908 the bells passed on to their present position in the beautiful St. Boniface cathedral with its "turrets twain" where they remain as the earliest bells that are in the same place, performing the same task, for which they came to Red River.

As one writer says, "We may never know what those bells must have meant to the boatman, the hunter and the early pioneer. Yet it is certain that in the rugged life of the early settlement they played a great part in keeping the settler's mind to the higher thoughts of life," and they are still carrying on that lofty task.

So the bells that sounded across a continent of space to a poet's ears, have now rung across a century of time to the new day in Red River.

V. The Bell of the Lower Fort

THE bell of the Lower Fort is the only Red River bell that has been fittingly honored at the end of its labors and no happier position could have been chosen than the place where it hangs from the old tree's arm above the flower beds of the Motor Country Club.

No doubt in its busy years it could never have dreamed of such prominence; hung in front of the governor's residence and noticed by the many visitors to the historic spot; but there, in a position of honor among the old-time buildings whose activities it so long dictated, it blends with the scene of today.

Alfred Franks, who lives near the fort in which he has spent most of his life, says that he first rang that bell as a lad of twelve when he entered the Company's service to tend the fort sheep. It then hung in a wooden framework on the ground behind a log sales-shop along the south wall.

It remained there until the stand was demolished in 1890, when it was mounted on top of the sales-shop and rung from within, a great improvement.

By the time the shop was also torn down the old life of the fort had ceased and the bell was no longer needed. Then it was, in 1911, that its part in the life of the fort was recognized and it was mounted on the tree, in ridges left by a children's swing of long ago.

The lad who tended the fort sheep and rang the bell, rang it until the Company regime ended. But its date is 1850, so that for longer than Alfred Franks can remember the bell regulated a busy hive of industry, both within and without the fort.

We get a brief picture of the place to which the bell came from Bishop Anderson's diary. Under date of May 24th, 1852, he wrote: "The fort has been improved with much taste by the Governor and Mrs. Colville and it has begun to wear much more of an English aspect. The annuals are above ground and the lawns smooth and green."

The bell ruled the lives of about sixty Hudson's Bay Company servants, store-keepers, clerks, warehousemen, cattle men, farm men, gardeners, carpenters, a miller, a blacksmith, men from the saw mill and brewery, fishermen, and men who built the boats; unmarried men housed in the men's house, married men from houses scattered outside the fort.

At 6 a.m., winter and summer alike, the bell summoned all employees to work. The store was then open to the public for business. At seven-thirty the bell rang for breakfast, at eight-thirty it called the men back to their work. At one o'clock its peals were the signal for an hour off for dinner, at two it rang for work, which then went on until the bell gave its final peal at six to lay off work for the day.

One of the Company institutions was a free commissariat, so on Saturdays at five, instead of six, the bell rang out and long lines formed at the provision stores for the weekly supplies. And many of these men even after being retired on land around the fort still regulated their households by the sound of the bell.

This military precision, the bell demanded not only of those belonging to fort life, but its signals and commands dominated the business, travel and pleasure of all who visited the busy centre.

Voyageurs and traders bringing their furs from the distant north listened for the sound of the bell. It meant the end of the journey, refreshment and rest, and they liked to make the fort at its ringing. But the sound was also a signal, and gay shouts rang out as brigades of canoes or York boats raced for the landing at the creek.

In winter as the bell rang, in through the big gate from the frozen river dashed rivaling dog teams loaded with furs near their weight in gold, urged by their drivers' compelling cries. Or from a fur-lined cariole bearing the Company's crest, out stepped a fur-clad chief factor or visiting official of the fur trade.

On a day in December each year, just after the bell's ringing, which had drowned the yelping of reluctant dogs, the shouts of exasperated drivers and the general bustle

BELLS OF RED RIVER



A WELL-EARNED REST—For sixty-one years this bell played a notable part in the making of history in this country. It served as a clock and a calendar for employees of the Lower Fort. Since 1911 it has been in retirement and now hangs on the limb of a tree on the grounds of the Motor Country Club.

of the northern packet assembling, that important train of loaded sledges started off bearing the annual mail and supplies for the farthest posts in the country.

The bell never rang on Sundays, nor on holidays except to celebrate the 24th of May and on New Year's Eve, when it fairly outdid itself with joy.

It was silent a whole week after it called the men on Christmas Eve to stop work and celebrate the holiday. Each man left with extra rations, butter, sugar, tea, beef, pork, rabbits and bacon; everything with which to make merry.

Then what a pealing began, to ring the old year out and the new year in! Everybody gathering round, laughter, hand-shaking, good wishes and good cheer, with Alfred Franks' arms sore from the pulling of the rope!

In earlier days, before Alfred Franks' time, there was a fort custom at New Year's which caused much rivalry and amusement. The bell in its high stand on the ground, then too rang the New Year in, and there was keen rivalry just before midnight, as to who could get to the bell first to ring it. There were always schemes afoot among the men to this end, for the lucky man then chalked up his name and the year at the bottom of the long list on the inside of the governor's front door and received a suitable reward for his achievement.

Once, in the early seventies, as New Year approached, the "gentlemen's servant," Sanderson, an acknowledged runner, became very boastful. No one could beat him to that bell rope! As his boastfulness grew, John Mowat, one of the clerks, planned to outdo him.

New Year's Eve arrived with its usual celebrations. To avoid suspicion, Mowat went out long before it was time to ring the bell, and, climbing to the top of the stand he hid himself under the cover beside the bell, and waited.

Just before midnight, came the grand rush from the men's house, and sure enough Sanderson was leading! He reached the bell stand only a few inches ahead of the next man and just as his hand went to close on the dangling rope, Mowat, tensed ready, jerked it up out of his reach and the bell began to ring! The air was filled with shouts and laughter; the boaster was beaten!

That was when Alfred Franks was a lad, but he says that when he grew old enough, no one ever beat him on New Year's Eve to ringing the bell which it was his duty to ring every other day in the year, so the rivalry and the custom died out.

But not only the passing of the hours and years, the daily routine and holiday joy did the bell mark, it rang for deaths, for births and for weddings.

It came out strong at weddings. Officials at northern posts found welcome relief from their isolated lives in a taste of Red River society. They came to the fort with their families and occupied the north half of the main floor in the governor's residence and many gay weddings took place.

Chief Factor Clark spent the summer there one year when his daughter married Sedley Blanchard, and there was a grand wedding long remembered. Old Archdeacon Cowley performed the ceremony, and Alfred Franks rang the bell. He rang it, too, with vigor, for the marriage of young Donald McTavish, of Norway House, a great favorite at the fort.

On the tragic 24th of May in 1877 the gay bell was silent. The queen's birthday celebrations began in the usual hearty manner in Red River.

At the fort the anvil from the forge had been taken out on the river bank and to the joy of numbers of children and others gathered round, charges of gunpowder were being set off by the blacksmith. In some way a spark fell in a keg of powder. The explosion was heard for miles and five children lay dead, the blacksmith's own child and two belonging to Mr. Flett, who was in charge of the fort.

The bell now hanging peacefully from the tree has rung out wild alarms for fire and flood, and its peals have mingled with the bugle calls of military life when soldiers were stationed at the fort in troubled times.

It rang when the first steamboat passed down the Red River in 1861, adding its note of celebration to the novel sound of a boat's whistle, and it always rang for important visitors.

BELLS OF RED RIVER

In the summer of 1877 it rang in honor of Lord and Lady Dufferin, the first governor-general and his lady to visit the West. The Lower Fort was included in their itinerary and Lady Dufferin recorded how they sorrowed with their hosts, the Fletts, in the recent tragic loss of their children.

And it is remembered that it rang on a significant occasion during the gathering troubles of 1869. It welcomed the last governor of Rupert's Land, William McTavish, when he came on his last visit to the fort before going to England to die.

One who witnessed his arrival, and saw him leaning on his cane and helped in by his man to a room prepared for him, said that the bell's peal of welcome brought the only glimmer of brightness to his sad and weary face that day.

So, during sixty years the bell of the Lower Fort has marked events long gone into Red River history. It has mingled its voice with commerce and with the traffic of dog-train and York boat. It has rung to the clatter of cavalry, to voyageurs' songs, to the screech of carts and to all the hearty hum of pioneer life. Now, it watches silently from the old tree's arm, a new and undreamed age.

VI. The Bells of St. Andrew's, St. John's and others

AFTER St. Boniface Cathedral's trine of bells arrived in 1840, two sets also of three bells each; came to lend an impetus to the new day on the west side of the river. One set came to St. Andrew's in 1850 and the other to St. John's Cathedral in 1862.

It was a great day at The Rapids when work on a new stone St. Andrew's was to begin. The grey dawn found a tall spare man, Archdeacon Cockrane, with a heart lifted up to God in thankfulness, turning the first sod before anyone else could arrive to take that privilege from him.

He planned that church with a tower to command the whole country round, a tower to house a peal of bells. He built the commanding tower but he never managed the bells.

That remained for the first bishop west of the Red River, Bishop Anderson, and it was not long, after taking over his work in 1849, before he carried St. Andrew's to completion by putting three bells in its fine tower.

In the Rupert's Land archives, preserved from that time, is an old book marked "St. Andrew's Account Book." Opening it one reads in a section marked "Bell Account" the following heading done in beautiful script by Alex Kennedy, clerk of the vestry.

"The Parishioners of St. Andrew's Church are aware that our Respected Bishop proposed last year to bear the Expense of two bells on condition of the Congregation finding a third. This Condition, generously proposed and joyfully accepted, has laid upon us a debt of £28 14s 4d. To discharge which your Contribution is Kindly Solicited."

Then follow five pages of 116 subscriptions, the largest of which was 12 shillings, money ill-spared by many, in a country where all lived by trade and barter and paid even their church subscriptions "in kind."

The clergyman, Rev. Robert James, headed the list with 10 shillings, his wife the same. And little Mary Ann James and her brothers Charles and Edwin Dillan parted with their pennies too, making the largest family giving on the list.

There was the "Widow Spence"—with far from the widow's mite, a subscription of five shillings—"Mr. Henery Cook," "Miss Sharlot Atkinson," "John knot and wife," and many others belonging to families still in the district: Hugh Gibson, the Pebbles (Peebles), Forbisters, Morwicks, Lesks (Leasks), Setters, Garriochs, Kiplens (Kiplings) and Chief Factor Wm. Sinclair.

James Corrigan was so keen on the matter that he subscribed twice, while Petter Henderson, most anxious of all to bring the list up to the required amount, subscribed three times!

We know the objective was reached for at the end of the list an inconspicuous entry reads:

"The Company account against St. Andrew's Church for £28 14s 3d. settled by Thos. Sinclair, June 9th, 1851."

So the bells ordered from London through the Hudson's Bay Company came to York Factory in 1850. Thos. Sinclair, of St. Andrew's, a magistrate and Councillor of the Colony, owned a brigade of boats that brought freight to the settlement, so Thomas was to bring the bells to their destination.

It fell out that he himself happened to be travelling on the boat that brought them. Not only himself, but he was bringing his new wife with him. They were on their honeymoon.

So the boatmen planned a celebration in honor of the occasion. At the first suitable camping place on the journey they brought the bells on shore, hung them on trees, and rang them for the bridal couple.



THE THREE BELLS OF ST. JOHN'S CATHEDRAL—Successors to John West's bell
Brought to this country by Bishop Anderson in 1862.

Then they finished the celebration in the fashion that events along that route of travel were marked, by making a lob stick. Trimming a tall tree of all but its topmost branches so that it would be a landmark, they left the names of those they were honoring carved in the bark of its trunk.

The bells duly arrived and were hung in the large open tower, where their ringing was recorded as calling together the largest congregations of any church in Red River.

"The Rapids," as the settlement at this point was called, was the social centre of Red River life. Here retired officers of the Hudson's Bay Company established themselves in comfort to end their days, and the bells summoned some very well-to-do and important people to the services.

Rev. James Hunter, in charge at St. Andrew's in the winter of 1851, wrote under date of October 12th: "The Governor (Governor Colville, of Ruperts Land), walked up from the Lower Fort on Sacramental Sunday to be present at the morning service, together with the fort servants."

That winter the bells rang on a great occasion, the ordination of Henry Budd, the first Indian in the country to be ordained, a boy John West had adopted and trained. People gathered from far and near; about 200 decorated carioles passed along the river to the ringing of the chimes, making a gay spectacle. All the clergy of the diocese but two, filed in while the bells were still ringing and 1,100 people filled the church to overflowing.

In 1852 one of the Red River's worst floods covered the country, and Bishop Anderson wrote afterwards: "The excitement . . . had prevented our noticing as we did today, the home sound of the bells of St. Andrew's, the only chimes amongst our churches."

Between the chimes at St. Andrew's the Lower Church, and the bell at St. John's, the Upper Church, now came a bell for St. Paul's, the Middle Church. We can learn little of its history since it is not even mentioned in the church records.

Archbishop Matheson recalls that it hung in the stone St. Paul's which preceded the present one. And it hangs today in a church built of wood for an interesting reason. It is recorded that the parishioners refused the bishop's offer of stone since, owing to the scarcity of fuel with which to withstand the cruel winters, they expected no one to continue long in the country.

I went to see this bell one day, but the men who were building a brick chimney up through the tower right beside it, said that they could find no markings on it. I was inclined at first to agree with them, when under accumulations of dirt I found something like a deep scratch showing up.

It proved to be part of the following inscription:

CAST IN 1853.

RECAST IN 1922 BY

VULCAN IRON WORKS.

With very laudable respect for things that make history, this company had cut the inscription on the side of the bell after its recasting to preserve its identity.

But further inquiries brought no further light on the bell; no one knew even why it had been recast!

In the thirty-five years that followed the arrival of John West's bell, other Anglican bells came to join those already mentioned and carry forward the new day in Red River.

Bells were not easily obtained in that era of beginnings. It is said that one of the early churches today, still calls its people to worship with a bell leased for ninety-nine years, from a penitentiary!

It is recalled of Rev. W. H. Taylor's bell at the St. James Church that it allowed none to absent themselves from church through forgetfulness, for it rang a warning nearly an hour before service and continued for half an hour or so that those who might have forgotten, would have plenty of time to get ready.

And it was a wonderful new day for the St. Peter's Indians who had been Christianized under the fine ministry of John Smithurst, Florence Nightingale's lover, when they, too, under Rev. Cowley, acquired a bell for their new stone church, a bell which still hangs there. Instead of the noise of the conjuror's rattle and the beating of the tom-tom, with which William Cockran had found them, they now listened for the sound of a church bell.

Then, in 1862, Bishop Anderson brought the second set of three bells to the west side of the river.

He had taken charge of the far-flung diocese centred at St. John's, that John West's bell had had a part in extending to the remotest points on the upper half of a continent, with one mission 3,000 miles away.

The new bishop found his cathedral, built in 1834, a dispiriting one, held up at the last by timbers braced against each side. In 1856 he went to England to raise money for a new church and was very successful.

But the task was to get it built. After many difficulties in making a beginning, the year 1860 found him struggling to bring the new cathedral to completion, with great trouble in getting men to carry on the work.

However it was opened with divine service on December 25th, 1862, the pews only just in and the paint scarcely dry, and three bells that had come from London rang out that day.

Church bells came into the country free of duty, by an early ruling of the Council of Assiniboia, and these bells had also been given a free passage by the Hudson's Bay Company. They weighed respectively, 200, 250 and 300 pounds, and were now mounted in the square tower of the cathedral.

There was much interest in the new bells. The "Norwester," the Press at that time, said: "... the bells, by the bye, are up—three in number. . . . Their prime cost was

over seventy pounds sterling. . . . They have been chiming every now and then during the last ten days; but it would hardly be charitable to characterize them on the confusion of sounds which have greeted our ears, for novices in the art of ringing can hardly be expected to do them justice. The sounds are loud and clear, and only require skilful ringing to produce harmony."

However they were soon giving out their musical notes, and a traditional but unofficial chant has come down through the years with their ringing.

It began when "old Tom White" (later discovered to be a member of the Irish aristocracy) used to ring the bell. As the mischievous school boys filed along two by two from St. John's College to the cathedral for service, they chanted under their breath to their own tramp and the pealing of the bells. Quickly quieted if a master were near, the hum rose and fell:

"Old Tom White, Old Tom White,
Come to church, Come to church,
Bring five cents, Bring five cents,
Old Tom White, Old Tom White."

repeated indefinitely. And it is said that the chant has persisted, changed only by the names of succeeding bell ringers.

Archbishop Matheson recalls that as time went on the cathedral tower became unsafe. It began to lean heavily against the main structure and endangered it. So it was pulled down and the bells were hung in a belfry built beside the cathedral. Later the cathedral itself could no longer be used, so bells and belfry were moved to a position behind the present parish hall on Main Street, where the belfry still stands.

The bells rang there for years while the building was used for church services. Then on the completion of the present cathedral they were hung in its spacious tower.

I went up into that roomy place recently to see them. I had repeatedly heard a story that on the bells' arrival in the country one of them was found to be cracked, but I could find no evidence of this. Each bell seems perfect and they have not been recast.

Around each, near the top, runs the maker's original inscription, "G. Mears and Company, Founders, London, 1862."

There is another old story that the St. Boniface bells, recast by Mears in 1862, and the St. John's bells cast by the same makers in the same year got mixed on the journey to Red River. The two sets of bells certainly resemble each other closely enough, even to inscriptions and dates, for this to have happened, although the St. Boniface bells are larger.

But the fact brought to light in this research, that the St. Boniface bells were shipwrecked and came to St. Paul in 1862, only to be returned to England and later re-shipped to Red River, and that the St. John's bells arrived without incident at Red River in 1862, rather discredits the story.

As I stood in the tower that day, thoughts of St. Andrew's bells linked themselves with those of St. John's, before me; both memorials to a great pioneering work.

Bishop Anderson, like John West, listened to his bells for the last time as he left for England, but the bells welcomed Bishop Machray who came in his stead.

The late Colin Inkster, in October, 1865, drove to the end of the railway line at St. Cloud, Minnesota, to meet the new bishop. On their return, at the end of a 500-mile drive, Mr. Inkster wrote: "When we arrived at St. John's, two or three miles from the fort, we were welcomed by the ringing of the bells from the tower of the cathedral," and he afterwards spoke of how happy they were at the sound.

Below the bells as I visited them, lay John West's records of the work he had initiated 117 years ago. Standing as I was, near the historic spot where his bell first rang out from the log frame by the schoolhouse, it seemed I could hear all the other bells that it had started, ringing on into the future, its message of a newer and more glorious day.



VII. Two Upper Fort Bells

WITH the bell of the Lower Fort so carefully preserved I thought it would not be difficult to locate that of the Upper Fort, but where was it? What had been done with it fifty-five years ago when the Upper Fort was torn down?

In 1839, when Captain Cary's men were still hauling stone for the Upper Fort, a fine bell arrived from England for it. This bell that knew a more stirring life than that of the Lower Fort; that was at the Company's head depot, the seat of government, and the centre of colony life, intrigued me.

So I began to look for it, a bell that came to the wilds and remained to become the bell of Manitoba's capital, Fort Garry; a bell dated 1839.

The first thing that happened was most disconcerting. I found two bells sitting in the most dignified manner within a stone's throw of each other, each suitably mounted and each, utterly ignoring the other, claiming to be the original bell of the Upper Fort under date of 1839!

One was in the Hudson's Bay Company museum and the neat authoritative legend it bore read: "No. 1552—dated 1839. Believed to have been used originally at Fort Garry. More recently used in Hudson's Bay Company's retail store in Winnipeg, but owing to complaints about its noise its use was discontinued about 1906."

The other bell was in the parliament buildings, mounted in an ancient red wooden stand and its equally neat and authoritative legend said: "Bell dated 1839. Used originally at Old Fort Garry. Afterwards used in the Hudson's Bay retail store until 1906. Presented by the Hudson's Bay Company."

It was in the room of an official who had inherited it with his place of business and he knew nothing about it. The stand with its bell was pushed into a corner; it cluttered up the neat office and he wished he were rid of it. It seemed that the late Mr. McDougall, sergeant-at-arms, who had used the room, took a great interest in the bell, but now he was gone.

The Hudson's Bay Company soon made it clear, with dignity matching their bell and its legend, that in spite of what any other bell might say, the museum bell was the original one of the Upper Fort.

There, as they pointed out, was the date of its casting, "1839," moulded on its side; there it was in its original mountings; it had never left their possession for a moment, and it was the bell whose unmusical voice had discontinued its use in 1906. I believed them, absolutely. Of course they knew!

It looked an important bell, well cast and of fine bell metal. This was the bell that the commerce of the Red River trails from St. Paul, commerce that supplied half a continent, took count of; for the cart trains always tried to make the fort at its noon ringing.

James McKay, too, marked his travel by it. As Sir George Simpson's famous guide from St. Paul to Red River, always on the tenth day of their start from Crow Wing, he used to set his passenger down proudly at Fort Garry before the noon bell ceased.

This bell had rung proudly on July 15th, 1870—as well it might—when its Fort Garry became the official capital of a province in the Dominion. Later, in October, 1877, it joined with everything that could make a noise, when Manitoba's first locomotive and cars loaded on a scow came down the river, and the country's isolation was over. It had been part of a people in the making.

But I felt sad for the other little bell. It had no date moulded on its side; it was not mounted on a proper yoke for ringing; it was roughened and worn. I hated to think of such a thing; it must be a usurper!

Yet somehow, it seemed so sincere with its nice little legend tacked on the stand saying, "Presented by the Hudson's Bay Company," and a second legend tacked beside it which read: "The surviving Bell(e) of Old Fort Garry. Her tongue has been silent for many years and she still wears the same petticoat she wore when young.



THE BELL OF THE UPPER FORT FROM 1839—It became also the bell of Manitoba's first capital, Fort Garry. It now rests in the Hudson's Bay Company's historical museum.

When young, her voice could be heard all over Fort Garry—now in her old age, placed in the custody of the Sergeant-at-Arms."

I just knew it could not be making false pretences, it seemed an honest little bell; there must be some solution to its claims.

It was smaller than the other bell, weighed about a hundred pounds, and it looked very old. At some time its mountings had been broken off and its usefulness terminated, after which a very primitive blacksmithing job—new iron mountings and clapper—had evidently put it into use again. I did not like to admit it, even to myself, but it looked like an old ship's bell!

And strange to say, it was cramped where it hung. If this was its first petticoat, it could never have rung from within it.

Canvassing all sources I could learn nothing more, but I could not rid myself of the feeling that the bell was like some people, mistaken on some of its points, but sincere.

The fine bell, with its identifying date in raised figures, was without doubt the bell of the Upper Fort from 1839. There it was on its original yoke just as it hung on top of the buildings that housed the fire engine, just as it hung when the fort cooper, St. Germaine ("Sazermah" in Red River), used to ring it. And when on occasion its "ding, dongs" came jerkily, the settlers who knew his one failing would say, "Old Sazermah is feeling good today."

So what could I do about the other bell? If I could only solve its puzzling pretensions! All I had was a theory, and history asks for proofs and facts.

I reasoned that when the pretender was put into Mr. McDougall's care it was supposedly an authentic gift. Someone with sound reason for doing so had put the legends on it in good faith.

So I inveigled Mr. Healy, the provincial librarian, into paying the bell a visit. He was able immediately to identify both legends on the stand as the work of a former library cataloguer whose cataloguing he handled every day. He thought the work had probably been done at Mr. McDougall's dictation, but he knew nothing of the bell's claims as a fort bell. On the contrary, he distinctly recalled Mr. McDougall telling him that it was an old ship's bell!

Mr. Smith, sergeant-at-arms in the legislature, told me that the bell had come into his predecessor's care in the old parliament buildings. He was familiar with it there for many years when it stood in the library against a background of book-lined walls.

That seemed to finish my information. I could get no further. So, reluctantly, I left the Pretender to a fate which I strongly felt it did not deserve.

One day, visiting a friend who had told me much about the Lower Fort bell—she had lived there for eighteen years—I told her about the Upper Fort Pretender in its little red wooden stand at the Parliament Buildings:

"Ah, that's not the Upper Fort bell at all!" she exclaimed. "It came from the Lower Fort. It stood in that stand on the lawn all the years I was there. It was never used, it was only an ornament. We used the other one."

Another Lower Fort bell! And just an ornament. That was why it was in such a cramped little stand.

But she did not know its history. However, she kindly visited the Parliament Buildings and identified the bell as the one she knew.

Next, I found an old gentleman over eighty, who had known the bell I showed him, in the same stand on the Lower Fort grounds ever since he could remember.

However could the bell's legend make such a mistake as to say "Old Fort Garry?" Then I had a happy thought. Alfred Franks, who had given all the working years of his life in the service of the Hudson's Bay Company mostly at the Lower Fort, would know that bell! I would ask him.

Yes, he knew it. It came from the Lower Fort. He had cut grass round that stand and raked it from under, since he was a lad; and his father before him was a Hudson's Bay Company servant there, and at the Upper Fort, too.

"My father came out with Captain Cary in 1836," Mr. Franks related. "They were brought out to run the Company's farm at the Upper Fort. My father worked there for a few years before he was sent to the Lower Fort.

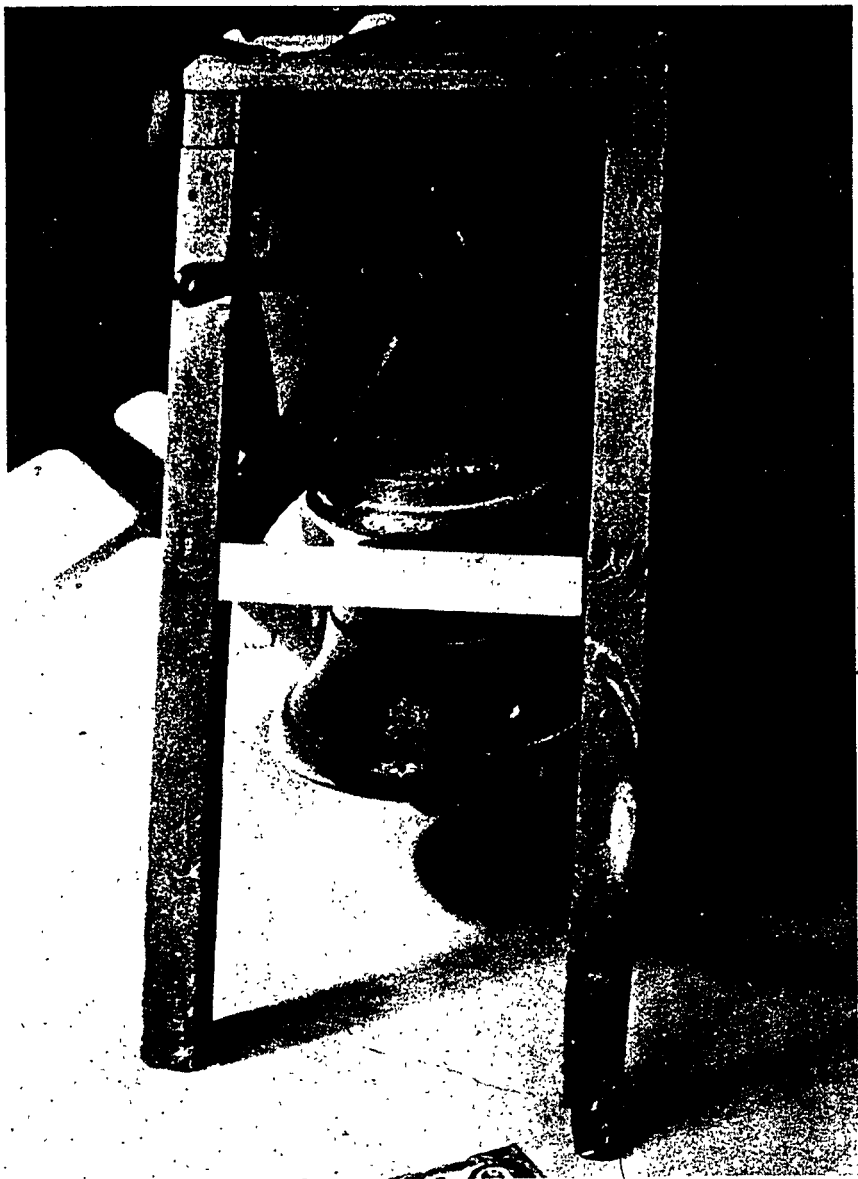
"What about the bell?" I asked. "Was it at the Lower Fort then?"

"Sure. The bell was at the Lower Fort before I was born."

That finished the Pretender. It hadn't a leg to stand on! Could anything be more decisive or authentic?

But oh, little bell, I was so disappointed in you!

"When I was old enough to help my father and cut the grass round the stand with a pair of shears, I used to ask him about the bell," continued Alfred Franks. "He



THE "PRETENDER"—Which was finally found to be the bell of Upper Fort Garry before 1839.

said he always had a special interest in it because when he came to the country they brought it with them from York Factory to use at the Upper Fort."

"The Upper Fort?" I asked incredulously.

"Sure. It was an old ship's bell, my father said, and it was used at the Upper Fort until the frame it was in burned down. They were afraid the bell would be broken or melted, but it was not harmed.

"Then they got the new bell and my father remembered bringing the old bell down to the Lower Fort himself. I knew that as the bell's history, all my life."

"Was it ever used at the Lower Fort?"

"I suppose that is what it was brought down for, because the Lower Fort didn't get its bell until 1850. But it was all long before I was born, so I can't say. All I know is the bell stood on the lawn from as early as I can remember, and I often wondered since, where it had gone to."

"How did it come to be put in the parliament buildings?"

"I don't know, unless when the Lower Fort was shut up in 1911 and they couldn't leave it there any longer, they may have given it to Mr. McDougall to care for. He liked those old things, and the Company hadn't any museum then."

So, though the mystery is not all cleared up, at least the ship's bell is not a Pretender. My theory had come true. It was the bell of the Upper Fort—but before 1839, before the museum bell.

VIII. Grace Church Bell

THE last bell of Red River days came to Grace Church, but on its arrival found itself a public institution. It was immediately adopted as the Town Bell by a village of 300 people just beginning to be called Winnipeg.

It was hung in a belfry beside the Wesleyan Methodist Mission House built by the Rev. George Young, in what was still Red River.

But on its other side the new Grace Church grew quickly, so that by the time it was finished in 1871, Mission House, bell and church were all in the newly formed province of Manitoba, in embryo Winnipeg.

This bell, which now hangs in St. Andrew's United Church, Emerson, has had a more spirited career than most church bells, since twice, each time for a period of some years, it has been town bell as well as church bell.

In each of these two periods of public service the bell saw a great day; one in 1870 and the other in 1918. Each time the peace of the country had been threatened and the bell found itself the voice of the people ringing out in jubilation at peace restored.

The village which in 1869 appropriated the church bell for all and every use, boasted of one policeman and one doctor; but no lawyers, no taxes, no postage stamps, no bank, no town council, no railway.

There was not even a stage line to bring people to the string of isolated ramshackle buildings along the muddy banks of the Red River near Fort Garry "where sidewalks," stated the *Free Press* later, "were as scarce as five cent drinks." So it was easy for the bell to cause a sensation.

It is the only bell that came to Red River by ox-cart and when it arrived, as a gift to the Methodist Mission from the Sunday school of Rev. Young's friend, the Hon. Mr. Gibbs of Oshawa, logs had to be sawn for a belfry and a Mission House.

Archbishop Tache, who had been since 1862 and for many years after, trying to finish his cathedral across the river, knew about building difficulties in a country where tools were scarce and there was neither lumber nor expert workmen.

In a letter to Mr. Young, prized by his granddaughter, Mrs. R. A. Clement, of Brandon, Bishop Tache wrote: "When your logs come down let me know and I shall be only too happy to lend you my pit saw."

Accordingly, when the bell arrived workers drew out logs from the river and sawed them with the Archbishop's saw and made a fine belfry of which Mr. Young was very proud.

When the men were sawing the logs Mr. Young voiced anxiety as recorded in his memoirs that they were not so careful with the saw as he could have wished. He evidently had reason as one sees from the following letter (also lent by Mrs. Clement) written after the work was finished and the bell put in the belfry by the same young men.

"St. Boniface, 17th April, 1871.

"The Rev. Mr. G. Young,

"Rev. and Dear Sir:

"Never mind the little mishap about the saw. It is the second time that the poor pit-saw suffers the same way from too much 'activity' on the part of young fellows, for the very same accident has already happened here under similar circumstances. You need not trouble yourself about the matter.

"I would only observe that the handle of the lower end has not been returned with the saw. Please give to bearer.

"Accept my best wishes and believe me

"Yours,

"Alex.—Bishop of St. Boniface, O.M.I."

A visitor to the settlement wrote: "The belfry, a heavy frame of timber, bears up a fine toned bell . . . weighing 250 pounds . . . given by the Sabbath School of Oshawa as the raised inscription cast on the external surface points out."

It was quite indicative of Mr. Young's public spirit that the bell immediately became everybody's property; the same spirit that prompted another of his public institutions—a pail of water with a dipper in it, on a bench at his back door so that none need go to Dutch George's tavern nearby on the plea of thirst.

Mr. Young always rang his own bell for the church services, and the bell that had been erected in a peaceful village and called together a congregation that overflowed the downstairs of his house, soon brought only a remnant. The Riel Insurrection broke out and many people sent their families from the growing terror and alarms to remoter and safer places.

We have been told that the bell tolled for the death of Thomas Scott that winter. This may be so, but Mr. Young in his account of events did not record it and I have not been able to substantiate the story. Mr. Young tried in every way to avoid ruffling the temperamental Metis leader and he obtained many favors from him, so it seems unlikely that he would do this.

But he certainly rang the bell with great joy on the long expected arrival of Lord Wolseley and his troops on August 24th, 1870.

It had been raining heavily for days, creeks and sloughs overflowed, obliterating roads and making travel well nigh impossible.

Mr. Young says: "In the early morning a rumor was afloat to the effect that Wolseley and his soldiers were coming up the river with all possible haste. . . . The storm had not abated . . . but a few young men, my son among them, unable longer to restrain themselves, set out on horseback to see if it were really so."

Presently a man on horseback was seen to gallop through the village, on to the fort, and then after a brief halt, he galloped back again in great excitement.

A few people began to gather in the shelter of the buildings along the road and Mrs. Crowson, mother of the late Mrs. Ashdown, who had been up all night stitching on a flag, had it ready to wave.

Soon there was a quick, imperative knock on the Mission House door and a messenger told Mr. Young that the news was indeed true; the soldiers had landed and were marching through the village.

Out into the rain he hastened with a piece of white cotton he had been preparing for that moment. On it was inscribed in large letters the word "WELCOME." Fastening it high on the side of the bell tower toward the soldiers' route of march, he waited in readiness at the bell rope.

Along through the stormy downpour, headed by Col. Wolseley and staff mounted on native ponies, came the first detachment of 1,200 men who had been travelling from Toronto since May.

With eager bronzed faces above soaking, mud-stained uniforms, keen for what awaited them at the journey's end, they marched ankle deep through the sea of mud between the straggling buildings and enthusiastic settlers; on, with a quickening pace, toward the fort.

The bell's first great day had come. Rev. Young curbed his eagerness at the rope until the soldiers came opposite. Then the bell pealed forth the people's joy, "with all the vim and emphasis I could command," he related, while women waved improvised flags and men cheered as they fell in behind the moving troops.

"Very frequently did I ring that bell," said Mr. Young afterwards, "but never so joyously as then;" and he, too, followed the soldiers to the fort, and helped with the three cheers they gave there for the Queen.

From this time, when Red River became Manitoba, a province in the Dominion (the Act had come into force in July) settlers from the East began to throng in.

The village near the Fort grew in desperation to accommodate the influx, a mushroom growth with rude buildings springing up in a few days, put together by anyone who could hold a hammer. It was stated in the Press that three men in four days brought a two-storied house, 24x44, to the stage called "enclosed."

Such buildings went up in flames on slight provocation and alarmed by the need of fire protection, the villagers got the loan of a "machine"—the Hudson's Bay Company's fire engine—from the Fort, established it in the village and organized a volunteer fire brigade.

Young Capt. McMillan, who came with Wolseley's troops and stayed to open a flour and feed store at the bottom of Notre Dame Street East, and whom Winnipeg remembers as Sir D. H. McMillan, was one of the early fire captains.

Then the town bell knew exciting times, for it became the fire alarm. The procedure was that anyone on seeing a fire rang the bell and gave the alarm. The young volunteers came running and if the fire could not be located by the smoke, they rushed "the machine" to the bell to inquire of the man who had rung the alarm.

Mr. Wm. Code, a member of the brigade and later Winnipeg's fire chief, as quoted in the *Free Press* recently, said: "When we heard Grace Church bell 'dinging' we dropped whatever we were doing and 'put' for the fire.



CUSTODIAN OF BELL—St. Andrew's United Church, Emerson, Man., whose steeple now houses the Grace Church bell. It came in the 80's to that border town which was then outstripping Winnipeg as the coming capital of the West.

"Sometimes we couldn't find it nor the man who gave the alarm," he went on. It seems that the bell was so accessible and it was so easy for a joker to mingle with the gathering crowd and watch the success of his joke, that false alarms occurred too frequently.

"But we were always 'laying' for those fellows though we never caught anyone," he says. "Mr. Young kept a great watch on the bell, and more than once on a dark night he frightened a suspect away from it."

By 1871 the village had more than doubled in population and times being more peaceful, Rev. Mr. Young got the rest of his logs down and with the help of many kind friends he built the first Grace Church at the present corner of Water and Main Streets. He commented that it was voted "the neatest little church north of St. Paul," and an Indian convert from the North viewing the interior asked with awe, would heaven be as beautiful?

The day of the church opening, September 17th, 1871, Mr. Young described as a "red letter day in the history of Winnipeg," and indeed it was, for the edifice was Winnipeg's first church. He was a happy man that day as he rang the bell for three church services, preaching at two of them himself.

In 1873, with the needs of youth strongly in mind, he also founded the Wesleyan Institute out of which his dream college, Wesley, grew.

Peaceful prosperous times continued in which church life flourished and Mr. Young went on proudly ringing his bell for prayer meetings, church services, tea meetings and soirees. Even for a children's tea meeting in 1873 at which eighty children were served with a whole roasted beaver as the chief dish of the feast!

Owing to the Methodist system of itinerancy Mr. Young left this scene of his pioneering in 1877, left his bell and Mission in an incorporated Winnipeg with a population of 5,522—a quickly growing town that at this time would compare its future with nothing less than Chicago!

Winnipeg's Grace Church soon became too small for its expanding needs so the services were held in Wesley Hall Block and the bell fell into disuse.

In 1880 the church trustees, recognizing Mr. Young's early work in Winnipeg, as a mark of appreciation, sent him the bell and belfry to Emerson where he was now stationed.

It was a personal gift, but it was soon in use at his church, the Tabernacle, once more taking part in an ever busier scene.

Those were years that come but once to a country. The fame of that Promised Land, "The Northwest," was bringing settlers in hordes and it held them with a strange power. They poured in by the hundreds every day once spring opened, people who were said to have "Manitoba-phobia." Many exchanged comfortable homes and good prospects, for the naked prairies and untold hardships. But with a gleam in their eye, the new arrivals could be seen sifting the rich soil of the Promised Land through their fingers, marvelling as if it were gold.

Many settlers went west on reaching Emerson and Rev. Young's Grace Church bell soon saw that Gateway City out-distance Winnipeg, with a population of 8,000, and 1,000 under tents until homes could be built.

Then George Young himself went to travel the West as Superintendent of Missions, leaving his bell in Emerson.

The collapse of "The Boom," and the floods of 1882 finished Emerson's phenomenal growth and prosperity, but the bell stayed where it was.

In 1910 Reverend George Young's earthly labors were over. Still the bell stayed on.

Amalgamation of the Episcopal Methodist and Wesleyan Methodist churches in Emerson came, and the bell was moved from the Tabernacle to a white brick church.

In 1916 Emerson's town hall with the town bell was destroyed by fire and again George Young's bell became a town bell with the same experience, even to being used as a fire alarm, that it had known in early Winnipeg.

And the bell's second great day came when peace was restored on Armistice Day, 1918. In its public capacity it found itself being rung at intervals all during the day to express a people's jubilation.

After its part in the stirring days of early Winnipeg Mr. Young spoke of the bell as "a historic bell." How much more so now, with fifty-seven added years of public service in Manitoba life!

After he retired from active work Mr. Young wrote in 1897: "The good old bell was duly loaned by me to the Board (of the Church) in Emerson for use until such time as required elsewhere.

"For the last seventeen years the loan has been continued, but I think the time has now fully come when it is more fitting that it should be returned to Winnipeg to become a portion of the equipment of Wesley College, where I trust it may long be regarded as a memento of former times."

There are friends of Rev. Young's who also recall him expressing this strong feeling about leaving the bell to the college that grew out of his small educational beginnings in the Wesleyan Institute.

But his intended removal of the bell was never carried out. He died without accomplishing it.

However, his pronouncement regarding the bell's disposal has not been entirely disregarded. As recently as some fifteen years ago, a committee, two members of which had been on Grace Church Board when the gift was made to Mr. Young, went to Emerson with the bell's removal in mind.

But one has only to see it in St. Andrew's United Church where it hangs today, so well cared for, meeting a practical need in the life of Emerson, and associated with the spot where Rev. George Young on first setting foot in "The Northwest," unfurled the Union Jack and sang the National Anthem, to understand why the committee came away and left it awhile longer.

It is evidently much prized. An old man from the bell's early days in Emerson, came into the church the day I visited it. Noting the stir of interest he smiled happily and said: "But they didn't get it away from us!"

This is the only bell I have seen in an open tower that has wire netting over the tower openings to protect it and keep it clean.

But its interest at St. Andrew's would be much enhanced if a brass plate bearing something of its history were placed on an outside wall of the church.

This bell has special interest and value for the future since it is the only Red River bell that has a personal inscription cast on it (even though Canada is spelled with two "n's") The abbreviation "W.M." represents "Wesleyan Methodist."

The inscription reads:

"JONES AND CO., TROY, N.Y., 1869.

PRESENTED TO THE

1ST W.M. CHURCH ERECTED IN

RED RIVER

BY THE W.M. SABBATH SCHOOL OF

OSHAWA, CANADA.

W. H. GIBBS, SUPT., A.D. 1869."

One wonders has this bell, through its intimate part in Emerson public life and the place it has made for itself in the citizens' affections throughout fifty-seven years, won the right to stay there?

Or should it be placed, according to its owner's expressed wish, in Wesley College, where it would be a fine memorial to a noted pioneer and his equally notable work?